

Notice of Allowability

Application No.	Applicant(s)	
09/978,030	DEGUCHI ET AL.	
Examiner	Art Unit	
Isaac M Woo	2162	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

- 1. This communication is responsive to response filed on 06/28/2004.
- 2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 15-16, 18-21 and 23-26.
- 3. The drawings filed on 08 March 2002 are accepted by the Examiner.
- 4. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some* c) None of the:
 - 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application. **THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

- 5. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 - 6. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 7. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- 1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
- 4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
- 5. Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6. Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
- 7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
- 8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
- 9. Other _____


JEAN M. CORRIELUS
PRIMARY EXAMINER

DETAILED ACTION

1. This office action is in response to the amendment filed on June 28, 2004. Claims 1-14 are canceled. Claims 15-26 are newly added. Claims 15-26 are presented for examination.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Steven Dickey (Agent No. 52,156) on 12/02/2004.

The application has been amended as follows:

For claim 15 (Currently Amended), rewrite, - - " A server connected to terminals used by members via a network, the server being configured to establish and update relationships between the members, the server comprising:

a database configured to store personal attributes of each member, the personal attributes including an identification code, a name, a specialized field, and relationship coefficient data indicating degrees of relationship between each member and other members;

a message communicator configured to communicate a first message from one

member to another member and configured to communicate a respective response to the first message from the another member to the one member, the response establishing a relationship between the one member and the another member;

a database update unit configured to update, when the relationship is established between the one member and the another member, the relationship coefficient data indicating degrees of relationship between (1) the one member and the another member, (2) the one member and members having relationships with the another member, and (3) the another member and members having relationships with the one member; and

a data retriever configured to identify target members having personal attributes satisfying one or more key words of a search criteria, the key words including at least a relationship coefficient data value indicating the degree of relationship between the target members and a particular member[.];

wherein the key words include a minimum or maximum relationship coefficient data value indicating a maximum or minimum degree of relationship between the target members and the particular member." - -.

For claim 20 (Currently Amended), rewrite, - -" A method of establishing and updating relationships between members using terminals connected to a server, the method comprising:

storing personal attributes of each member, the personal attributes including an identification code, a name, a specialized field, and relationship coefficient data

indicating degrees of relationship between each member and other members;

communicating a first message from one member to another;

communicating a respective response to the first message from the another member to the one member, the response establishing a relationship between the one member and the another member;

updating, when the relationship is established between the one member and the another member, the relationship coefficient data indicating degrees of relationship between (1) the one member and the another member, (2) the one member and members having relationships with the another member, and (3) the another member and members having relationships with the one member; and

identifying target members having personal attributes satisfying one or more key words of a search criteria, the key words including at least a relationship coefficient data value indicating the degree of relationship between the target members and a particular member[.];

wherein the key words include a minimum or maximum relationship coefficient data value indicating a maximum or minimum degree of relationship between the target members and the particular member. - -.

Last line in claim 25, delete [one of Claims 15-19,] and insert - -"one of Claims 15-16, 18-19," - -.

Cancel claims 17 and 22.

3. The pending claims are now 15-16, 18-21 and 23-26

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 15-16, 18-21 and 23-26 are allowed.

Reason For Indicating Allowable Subject Matter

5. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: Claims 15 and 20 identifies distinct feature, the method for computer network connected server configured to establish and update relationships between members with database configuration and message communicator. The closest prior art Weinreich et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,175,831) discloses for human relationships registering system (col. 2, lines 11-54, col. 3, lines 16-31), first data processing unit including section for inputting personal data of new members (user1), (col. 18, lines 21-41, col. 6, lines 47-67 to col. 7, lines 1-67 to col. 8, lines 1-24, user1 (new member), to become member; and second data processing unit including, section for storing the received personal data of the new members by confirming relationships of the new members with existing members (pre-registered member), (col. 2, lines 11-54, col. 3, lines 16-31, fig. 6, col. 12, lines 8-58). However, Weinreich fails to suggest the claimed features "a database for updating and data retrieving method, the relationship

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coefficient data indicating degrees of relationship between the one member and the another member, the one member and members having relationships with the another member, and the another member and members having relationships with the one member, a data retriever configured to identify target members having personal attributes satisfying one or more key words of a search criteria, the key words including at least a relationship coefficient data value indicating the degree of relationship between the target members and a particular member, wherein the key words include a minimum or maximum relationship coefficient data value indicating a maximum or minimum degree of relationship between the target members and the particular member" in combination with other limitations of the dependent and independent claims. For the reason stated above, the pending claims 15-16, 18-21, 23-26 are hereby allowed.


Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Isaac M Woo whose telephone number is (571) 272-4043. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John E Breene can be reached on (571) 272-4107. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

IMW
December 7, 2004


JEAN M. CORRIELLUS
PRIMARY EXAMINER